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1962/09/26

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SECRET-EYES ONLY

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September 26, 1962

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL EISENHOWER,
ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1962.

DCI discussed the proposed Donovan project, tracing the inception of the Citizens Committee, the discussions with Robert Anderson, the appointment of Donovan as Committee Council; DCI encouraging Donovan trip to Cuba and the results of Donovan/Castro discussions as summarized in the Donovan/DCI telephone conversation of 9/25, and the Donovan conclusion that (a) a deal could be made, (b) price 62 M food and medicine at Cuban retail values, (c) Castro lists indicated about 54 M food and 8 M medicine, (d) Donovan thought it could all be medicine, (e) Cuba retail prices about five times our actual cost for medicine therefore the cost would be about \$10-12 M out of pocket.

McCone thought some food must be supplied. Secretary of Agriculture had authority and CIA had reserve funds but under Congressional injunction because of tractor deal. E. seemed favorable toward food, noting that it would help dispose of some surpluses.

Therefore McCone sought Eisenhower's advice on approaching selected Republican members of Senate and House if President Kennedy would approach selected Democratic members to solicit support and have injunction removed. McCone stated had talked with President Kennedy who looked with favor on plan -- McCone wished Eisenhower's views.

After long exchange Eisenhower agreed idea worth a try. Agreed McCone could use his name in discussions. Suggested that after McCone and President Kennedy initial talks concluded then Democrats and Republicans should meet jointly with President Kennedy and McCone to ensure common understanding -- then Donovan should move at once.

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Eisenhower then proposed a guarantee of delivery of goods be made and all prisoners released at one time and then guarantee drawn down as goods actually received in Cuba.

Warned against the danger of failure and therefore only a few should know and U.S. involvement never disclosed and plan always denied if deal falls down or Castro runs out as he did on the tractor deal.

Eisenhower disturbed that foreign policy getting into politics -- quoted Kennedy speech in which he referred to "8 years of drifting under Eisenhower and now things better" -- also Cuba was lost to Communism under Ike administration.

McCone agreed to call Eisenhower after meeting with President Kennedy.

John A. McCone
Director

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